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POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

MAGIC

We passed old farmer Boothby in the field.  
Rugged and straight he stood, his body steeled  
With stubbornness and age. We met his eyes  
That never flinched or turned to compromise,  
And "Luck!" he cried, "good luck!"—and waved an arm,  
Knotted and sailor-like, such as no farm  
In all of Maine could boast of; and away  
He turned again to pitch his new-cut hay.  
We walked on leisurely until a bend  
Showed him once more, now working toward the end  
Of one great path; wearing his eighty years  
Like banners lifted in a wind of cheers.

Then we turned off abruptly—took the road  
Cutting the village, the one with the commanding  
View of the river. And we strode  
More briskly now to the long pier that showed  
Where the frail boats were kept at Indian Landing.  
In the canoe we stepped, our paddles dipped  
Leisurely downwards, and the slim bark slipped  
More on than in the water. Smoothly then  
We shot its nose against the rippling current,  
Feeling the rising river's half-deterrent  
Pull on the paddle as we turned the blade  
To keep from swerving round; while we delayed  
To watch the curious wave-eaten locks;

*Magic*

Or pass, with lazy turns, the picnic-rocks.  
Blue eels flew under us, and fishes darted  
A thousand ways; the once broad channel shrunk.  
And over us the wise and noble-hearted  
Twilight leaned down; the sunset mists were parted;  
And we, with thoughts on tiptoe, slunk  
Down the green alleys of the Kennebunk.

*Motionless in the meadows  
The trees, the rocks, the cows.  
And quiet dripped from the shadows  
Like rain from heavy boughs.*

*The tree-toads started ringing  
Their ceaseless silver bells;  
A land-locked breeze came swinging  
Its censer of earthy smells.*

*The river's tiny cañon  
Stretched into dusky lands;  
Like a dark and silent companion  
Evening held out her hands.*

*Hushed were the dawn's bravados,  
Loud noon was a silenced cry;  
And Quiet slipped from the shadows  
As stars slip out of the sky.*

It must have been an hour more, or later,  
When, tramping homeward through the piney wood,

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We felt the years fly back, the brotherhood  
Of forests took us—and we saw the satyr!  
There in a pool, up to his neck, he stood  
And grinned to see us stare, incredulous—  
Too startled to remember fear or flight.  
Feeling the menace in the crafty night,  
We turned to run—when lo, he called to us!—  
Using our very names he called. We drew  
With creaking courage down the avenue  
Of birches till we saw, with clearing sight,  
(No longer through a tricky pale-green light)  
Familiar turns and shrubs, the friendly path—  
And Farmer Boothby in his woodland bath!  
The woods became his background; every tree  
Seemed part of him, and stood erect, and shared  
The beauty of that gnarled serenity,  
The quiet vigor of age that smiled and squared  
Its shoulders against Time. And even Night  
Flowed in and out of him, as though content  
With such an element;  
Happy to move about a spirit quite  
As old, as placid and as confident.

Sideways we turned. All glistening and unclad  
He leaped up on the bank, light as a lad,  
His body in the moonlight dripping stars.  
We went on homeward, through the pasture-bars.